What is claimed is:

1. A method for using a performance interface to retrieve performance data from SAN devices in a storage area network (SAN), the method comprising:

instructing a device plug-in (DPI) to retrieve performance metrics data from a corresponding SAN device;

determining a minimum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the performance metrics data;

determining a maximum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

collecting the performance metrics data from the DPI using the performance interface.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing the DPI with an address of the SAN device.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising instructing the DPI to perform a task to retrieve the performance metrics data.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes reading log files maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes navigating structure of internal counters maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein the task includes implementing specific application programming interface (API) calls into management software for the corresponding SAN device.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the instructing step includes instructing the DPI to retrieve performance metrics data from a corresponding storage array.

8. A system for using a performance interface to retrieve performance data from SAN devices in a storage area network (SAN), comprising:

a plurality of device plug-ins (DPIs), each DPI communicates with a SAN device to retrieve performance metrics data from the SAN device, each DPI comprises a performance interface, the performance interface comprises:

a function indicator instructing the DPI to retrieve performance metrics data from the corresponding SAN device;

a minimum polling indicator determining a minimum polling interval for polling the corresponding SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

a maximum polling indicator determining a maximum polling interval for polling the corresponding SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

a performance application that collects the performance metric data from the plurality of DPIs using the performance interface.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the performance interface further comprises an address indicator that provides the DPI with an address of the SAN device.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein the DPIs are Java code.

11. The system of claim 8, further comprising a plurality of abstract data sources, each abstract data source corresponding to a SAN device, each abstract data source receiving from and transmitting data to the performance interface.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the abstract data sources are Java code.

13. The system of claim 8, wherein the performance application polls the SAN at particular intervals between the minimum polling interval and the maximum polling interval.

14. The system of claim 8, wherein the DPIs perform a task to retrieve the performance metrics data.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes reading log files maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes navigating structure of internal counters maintained by the corresponding SAN device.

17. The system of claim 14, wherein the task includes implementing specific application programming interface (API) calls into management software for the corresponding SAN device.

18. A computer readable medium providing instructions for using a performance interface to retrieve performance data from SAN devices in a storage area network (SAN), the instructions comprising:

instructing a device plug-in (DPI) to retrieve performance metrics data from a corresponding SAN device;

determining a minimum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the performance metrics data;

determining a maximum polling interval for polling the SAN device for the performance metrics data; and

collecting the performance metrics data from the DPI using the performance interface.

19. The computer readable medium of claim 18, further comprising instructions for providing the DPI with an address of the SAN device.

20. The computer readable medium of claim 18, further comprising instructions for instructing the DPI to perform a task to retrieve the performance metrics data.